

# THE HENRYS ~ Biography

- 5 CDs
- band started in 1990
- featured sound is an acoustic slide guitar called a Kona, put in a 'modern-roots' setting with a wide variety of old and new instruments
- cult-fave singer Mary Margaret O'Hara on all CDs
- performs live as a quartet, with portable (folding) pump organ/vocalist, Kona, acoustic bass and drums
- has performed in Canada (incl. Vancouver and Calgary Folk Festivals), USA (SXSW and Bottom Line in NYC), New Zealand (Sweetwaters Festival), Holland (North Sea Jazz), Italy
- 4 star reviews in *Mojo* and *Q* Magazines

A Toronto-based 'nearly-instrumental' group that performs as a quartet (Don Rooke, Michelle Willis, Mark Mariash, Andrew Downing), but records with a larger stable of players. Led by Don Rooke, since 1990 the band's goal has always been to compose, record and perform original music that has no obvious genre, but draws on a variety of styles in an original, identifiable way. In the words of *Toronto Star* reviewer Greg Quill:

*Toronto kona player Don Rooke and his ensemble of like-minded abstract sound architects stand out on their fourth album as the high-minded intellectuals in their class, the quiet scientists scratching away at the borders of the folk/time continuum. 'Old instruments, new sounds' is the way Rooke describes what The Henrys do - they extract from a resonator guitar and other plucked acoustic instruments the harmonics, overtones and oblique noises behind the rustic notes to create landscapes that are astonishingly romantic, frightening, sexual, spiritual - and quite beautiful. Brave new music.*

The music features the sound of an antique slide guitar called the kona (and other slide guitars). Manufactured out of Hawaiian koa wood in California in the 1920s, the kona has a rare tonal purity. It's played slide style, flat, with a small steel bar. Mixed with vocals, organ, bass and drums - and often unusual elements: conch shell, quarter-tone trumpet, pump organ, chordette, odd percussion pieces, sonar zombie, steel drums - the sound of the band has been defined and refined over the years.

The Henrys have been performing (on and off) for almost 20 years, with concerts around the world. They've played at the Sweetwaters festival in New Zealand, the North Sea Festival in Holland, SXSW in Austin, Luminato and Harbourfront Centre in Toronto, the Vancouver and Calgary Folk Festivals, and many other locations. They headlined at NYC's famous Bottom Line in 1998. It is the eclectic nature of the music that makes them equally at home in folk, jazz and indie/alternative venues.

The group's latest CD, *Is This Tomorrow*, is their fifth. It joins four other internationally acclaimed recordings: *Puerto Angel* (1994), *Chasing Grace* (1996), *Desert Cure* (1998), and *Joyous Porous* (2002), as well as a solo CD, *Atlas Travel*, by the band's leader. Information, reviews, listening, photos available at [thehenrys.ca](http://thehenrys.ca).

The Henrys continue to perform wherever they can afford to.